



SAVE LAKE WEIR NEWSLETTER

The Save Lake Weir Association is committed to the protection, preservation, and restoration of the magnificent natural beauty that is Lake Weir.

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February 2023

Reese Bourgeois, President
Laura McDonald, Vice President

Carol Caruso, Secretary
Bonnie Meyer, Treasurer

Annual Membership Meeting Sunday, February 26, 2023, 2:00 PM

The annual meeting will be held at the Lake Weir Yacht Club, 13830 SE 145th Avenue Rd, East Lake Weir. The Yacht Club is located 2.5 miles east of Ocklawaha. Turn west from CR 25 onto SE 139th Place and drive to the end of the road. Dessert will be served at 2:00 pm. The meeting will start approximately at 2:30 pm. Board of Directors for the coming year will be elected. Members are encouraged to bring to the Board of Director's attention their concerns and anything they feel the board should address this year.

Membership

Your dues must be current in order to vote at this meeting and receive newsletters. Annual dues are \$10 per person per year and \$100 per person for a life membership. Enclosed for your convenience is a return envelope and membership card to be filled out and returned. Life members should use the membership card only to update email, address, and phone numbers. If you have not received an email from us this year, we need to confirm a correct email address. According to the by-laws, if annual dues are delinquent more than one year, membership is terminated. We need your membership in order to be an effective organization. Last year we made it easier to join or renew your membership with an online option. Go to www.savelakeweir.com and click Pay Online (top right). Thanks to all of the new members that joined throughout the year in 2022. There are still a number of new residents on Lake Weir so invite your neighbors!

Recognition of Board members

Lou Archibald – At Large
Reese Bourgeois - Little Lake Weir
Carol Caruso - East Lake Weir
Cliff Forrester - Sunset Harbor
Bill Trice – At Large

Tom Cartwright - At Large
Bonnie Meyer - Weirsdale
Jane Sands - Ocklawaha
Laura McDonald - At Large

Elections

Three seats on the board shall be filled by election each year as stated in the By- Laws. Current board member Bonnie Meyer and Bill Trice have agreed to continue to serve. We thank Lou Archibald for

many years of service to the Save Lake Weir Association, Lou has decided not to run for re-election. Greg Wiley has been nominated to replace Lou as an At Large representative.

Bonnie Meyer - Bonnie is currently serving as a board member for Save Lake Weir since 2020 and is also named Treasurer since 2021. Bonnie is a full time resident as of 2017 with a home on Lake Weir's south shore however, her history with our lake dates back to the time her relatives discovered Lake Weir in the late 1950's and her parents built a home on the South shore in 1968 which is still owned by her family. Bonnie's mother, Nancy McCarter (deceased 2021), was on the first Board of Directors of Save Lake Weir. Bonnie is excited to assist with continuing work to ensure Lake Weir remains healthy for future generations.

Bill Trice – Bill is a 20 plus year resident of central Florida with a home on the shores of Little Lake Weir. A native Floridian, Bill is a graduate of the University of Florida and South Florida. He continued his education at University of Miami Medical School and traveled to Wisconsin to complete his internship at Gunderson Clinic in La Cross. Bill served as Captain US Army Medical Corp Battalion Surgeon 27 Engineer Corps RVN. He eventually returned to Florida to open a private Internal Medicine practice and serve as Director of Out Patient Medicine and the Internal Medicine Residency Program for Ocala Regional Hospital. Bill has been married to his wife Barbara for 53 years has 2 children Jennifer Jones and William W Trice and 3 grandchildren.

Greg Wiley – Greg was born and raised in Ocala, he and his family enjoyed a week on Lake Weir just about every summer at a family friend's lake house during his childhood. He never imagined that one day he would live on the Lake. Greg has been married to his wife Sheri, for 38 years. They have a daughter “Amber” who is married and has 2 sons and they have a son “Cody” who married in January. Greg recently retired as the Parks Operations Manager from Marion County and has really enjoyed living on the east shore for the past 12 years. He hopes to use his experience working with various environmental agencies throughout his career to enhance the quality of the lake and life in and around the lake.

Speaker at Annual Meeting – Jennifer Mitchell

Jennifer Mitchell is Public Communications Coordinator with the St. Johns River Water Management District. She is passionate about Florida's incredible water resources and hopes to spark your interest in what you can do to help protect Florida's waterways. After earning her Ph.D. in Forest Ecology from Auburn University, she completed a post-doc at the University of Florida in Soil and Water Science. Because she realizes that greater results will come from more community participation, she now works to spread the message of how individuals can reduce their impact on our waterways.

Current Projects and Updates

Septic to Sewer

The petition for demonstrated interest for Marion County was submitted for final review and was approved by the county. Reese Bourgeois and Bonnie Meyer met with Marion County Utilities and the county MSBU (Municipal Services Business Unit) Department to confirm the next steps of initiating a sewer system for the north shore of the lake. The following process shall proceed:

1. The MSBU department will confirm and finalize the boundaries for the MSBU. The zone (originally labeled the EU zone by the county) was picked because of the more dense population and the ease of access to a sewer station. The zone runs roughly from Carney Island to just south of Hampton Beach. By establishing the MSBU we define the purpose and finalize

the boundaries, this step costs the residence nothing, it only makes the future steps run more efficiently.

2. Marion County Utilities will determine a high level estimate of the cost to build the sewer infrastructure for this specific MSBU district.
3. Initiated by the county, each resident in the final MSBU boundary will receive a petition that outlines an estimated price per parcel/hookup to determine support. The high level estimated price will be quoted as a worst case scenario with no grant money or financing options included.
 - a. A returned 'in favor of' response to this petition does not bind any resident to anything at this stage
 - b. Marion County Utilities will submit for Grant Money from the State as well as from the District. It is highly likely that grants and financing for this project will be secured thereby reducing the estimate provided in the petition.
 - c. Save Lake Weir Association will work with the county to send out prior communications that will hopefully allow people to make the right choice to go forward and save Lake Weir.
4. There will be a 60 day petition phase, after which, the MSBU Department will open and tabulate the results. If the majority of returned petitions are in favor of the project, the results will be presented to the Board of County Commissioners for review and acceptance. At this time a public hearing will be held to approve the establishment of the MSBU. A subsequent public hearing will be held for the rate resolution.
5. Once all approvals are finalized, the county will proceed with the project design and permitting, a 12 to 18 month process, and proceed with construction - a 24 month process.

If we are successful in getting the north shore of the lake moving forward with a sewer plan (we are still talking years but not decades), subsequent zones around the lake, which may be an expansion of the already established MSBU, will follow with the same process minus the initial legwork used to provide proof of interest. There will be a representative from Marion County Utilities and the county MSBU Department in attendance at the annual meeting.

Lakewatch

In 2022 Save Lake Weir re-initiated our participation in the University of Florida Lakewatch program. Seven Save Lake Weir member volunteers including Reese Bourgeois, Bonnie Meyer, Jim Meyer, Tim Roberson, Bill Trice, Wyatt Earp and Gwen Ehler were trained by Marina Schwartz on the correct process for monthly lake water gathering and filtering. Several specific geolocation marks were selected in Big Lake Weir, Sunset Harbor and Little Lake Weir. Each month the volunteers collect the samples from the assigned locations and filter the water with specific tools and instructions provided by Lakewatch. The samples are then delivered to a freezer location for pick-up and processing by the University of Florida/IFAS.

Data from this initiative, which started in the first week of July 2022, is being processed and will be reported to the Save Lake Weir Association membership via email periodically. Based on the updates provided so far, we've noticed that the total phosphates have risen over 60% in Lake Weir and over 30% in Little Lake Weir in the past 10 years. It's the first data collection, and we'll soon have another quarter of a year of data, but it could explain the recent increase in algae growth in Lake Weir.

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Lake Water Levels

Several water front residence have inquired about the current Lake Weir lake levels. The level is currently at a 17 year high. This is considered positive for the lake health, but understand it may not seem that way if you have a recently installed permanent dock. However, scientifically – knowing that the water levels continue to fluctuate as they have for the last 81 recorded years is great news. You can find the data at this site: <https://www.sjrwmd.com/data/hydrologic/#lakes>

Communication Plan

In 2022 we stepped up our communications plan – facilitating three distinct mailings and adding significant content to our website. Our mailings to non-member residence resulted in over 20 new members half of which signed up for lifetime membership.

In 2023 we will continue to evaluate the data we collect in conjunction with the county to determine focus areas. We will build future communication strategies for members and non-members with the goal to keep residents informed and to educate everyone on best practices that foster lake health.

Septic Grant Money

The Marion County Office of the County Engineer (OCE) Septic Grant Money program continues. The purpose of the grant is to assist owners of such systems with routine maintenance pump-out and inspection costs, as well as relief from permit fees.

Additional details and links to the applications are on the Save Lake Weir website (www.savelakeweir.com) under the Current Initiatives page.

This program is funded by an annual Run For The Springs 5K of which Save Lake Weir is a sponsor. This year the event will be held at the Baseline Trailhead on the Cross Florida Greenway. The run will begin at 7AM on Saturday, April 22, 2023. The more participation in this event, the more residents can be reimburse for their septic maintenance expenses.

Invasive Species and Algae Reporting

Reminder – all Save Lake Weir Members can assist with collecting data for Lake Weir by reporting sightings of Invasive Species and Algae. All information on how and where to report can be found at the Save Lake Weir Website www.savelakeweir.com on the Metrics page for Algae reporting and on the Guide to Homeowner Waterfront Living page for Invasive Species reporting.

Remember – you can pay your annual dues online at www.savelakeweir.com